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## THE IDEAL NURSE

By REBECCA H. McNEILL, R.N.

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AMONG the various occupations followed by women of the present day, there is not one that appeals more to woman's instincts than that of nursing. It demands, possibly, less heroic strength than patient attention to detail and an ability to preserve a high moral, mental, and physical standard. Three qualifications are conceded pre-eminently to be desired: first, general culture; second, practical knowledge; and third, theoretical knowledge.

Nursing is an art; a work, not merely a calling; a science auxiliary to the medical profession. We all have our ideals in life. Many of us from want of will power and other human weaknesses fall far below them, but no man or woman, whatever his or her vocation in life may have been, has ever risen above them. Life is very real, and we are to act, not to be "merely speculative"; not to dream, idealize, or theorize over its problems, but to accept our share of responsibility.

Nursing as a woman's special vocation, as a privilege and God-given talent, is not a profession the duties of which may be lightly assumed. It is a grave responsibility, and upon our vigil often depends the issues of life and death. Unless a nurse is prepared for a life of untiring effort and disappointments, discomforts or deprivations, countless sacrifices of time, talent, and inclination, unless, indeed, able to suppress her own heartaches and to give herself bravely and brightly to the work with patience, enduring all things, and with faith, hoping all things, I would beg of her to hesitate before choosing as her mission in life that of nurse. She must have singleness of purpose, directing all her energies toward the faithful accomplishment of her life's work; be loyal to her doctor, her patient, and herself; having neither eyes nor ears for the misfortunes of others, and saying only those things that she is sure will prove helpful to her patient, remembering that "silence is golden" and that gossip is a major sin.

My ideal is one who has not been hardened by the scenes of suffering through which she has passed. No true nurse ever loses her sympathy, though she must cultivate the art of controlling it; she has the deep sympathy which causes her not only to feel for her patient's woes, but prompts her best efforts to alleviate them. She has the spirit of a surgeon in one of our large cities, who knelt for hours by the mangled form of a

poor boy, exerting all his energy and skill to save his life. The child, surprised at meeting such kindness, looked up and said: "Doctor, why are you trying so hard to save my life when you know that you will never get a cent for it?" The good man replied, "Child, I would rather be the instrument in God's hand of saving life than be the President." Yes, the true nurse is devoted to her work, faithful in all that she does, neither shrinking nor shirking any responsibility that may present itself.

And once again, the ideal nurse should be able to understand the whys and wherefores of her physician's orders, and be able to execute them with judgment. One of the first requirements a physician expects of a nurse is obedience, but he expects that obedience to go hand in hand with comprehensiveness and judgment. The more thoroughly qualified and the better trained a nurse is, the less she is liable to assume responsibilities which belong to her doctor.

One of the strongest reasons why every woman should study nursing as an accomplishment is, that she may testify of her loyalty and affection to those near and dear to her, for in sickness even more than in health we instinctively turn to the mother or sister for that sweet peace and tranquillity which woman possesses. As a profession, no field has been opened so broadly as this, and in no field will you find such rich rewards for the little sacrifices and loving kindnesses you will have to practice. To lull into a restful sleep a tired brain or soothe a fevered brow into forgetting pain,—how sweet the reward to go no further than the pleasure of doing the mere act.

The life of a nurse to be ideal must be that of a Christian, remembering that, "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of these, ye did it to Me."

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## THE WORK OF THE NURSING STAFF OF THE BOSTON CONSUMPTIVES' HOSPITAL, OUT-PATIENT DEPARTMENT

By ELISABETH P. UPJOHN

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IN giving a sketch of the work of the nursing staff or perhaps more properly called the social service department of the Boston Consumptives' Hospital, it must be remembered that we are little more than two years old and that our story is one of organization and growth rather than that of results achieved.